



THE HINGHAM LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

2015 Annual Report & Newsletter

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Annual Meeting – Too Many Deer?

CHARLES WILLSE

A large crowd attended the Annual Meeting, which began with the election of our Board of Trustees and the organization's officers: Charles Willse as Chairman, Joe Bierwirth as Vice Chairman, Tony Kiernan as Treasurer, and Skip Hull as Secretary.

Most residents' experience suggests there are too many deer in Hingham. For our presentation we asked an expert, David Stainbrook, the Deer and Moose Project Leader for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, to share his findings. His talk and slide show was fascinating and informative.

An overabundance of deer creates many problems, including dangerous deer/vehicle collisions, residential landscape plant damage, and rising incidences of Lyme disease. The forest degenerates as young native saplings are browsed and eliminated; accelerating the spread of invasive plants. The plant understory changes, reducing mammal, songbird and insect populations and diversity. In Massachusetts, 10 to 18 deer per square mile of forest is a sustainable deer population in ecological balance.




Deer in suburbia, cute but destructive

Our speaker, David Stainbrook, estimated the deer population in Hingham at 40 deer per square mile. This population will not be reduced by the current level of hunting allowed on town and private land. Last year 35 deer were harvested by licensed archery hunters with Hingham permits. Currently no deer hunting is allowed in Wompatuck State Park.

If regulated deer hunting with archery and firearms were allowed in Wompatuck it would reduce the

population in the park, and land within one-half mile of the park border, to the state-wide population goal in five years. This would be a significant improvement. Additional town and private land on the north side of Hingham needs to be opened for hunters to reduce the deer abundance town wide.

The talk was followed by a lively question and answer period and refreshments were served. Venison was not available. 


The 2010 edition of the "Parklands for the Public" map is available at the library, the Conservation Commission and Town Clerk's offices, and by mail to members who request it on their HLCT donation envelope. Copies are on display in the Hingham Public Schools libraries and classrooms.

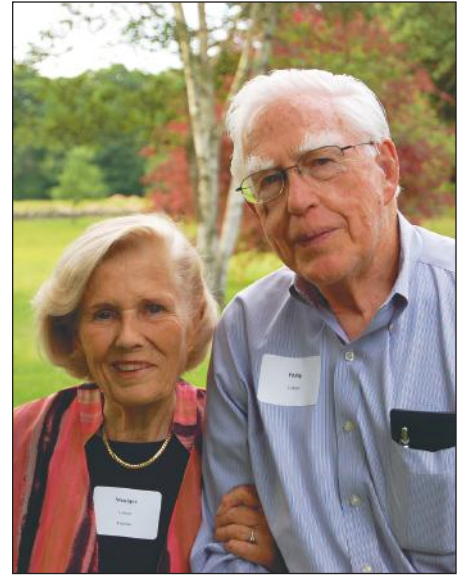


The sunny autumn days are a colorful time to wander outdoors and explore the beautiful places we love in Hingham. We are fortunate to have so many parcels open to the public.

I would like to draw your attention to one of the Land Trust's own special places: Jacob's Meadow. This 50 acre landscape features mature stands of oaks, beeches, and pines populating glacial drumlins and eskers. Vernal pools for amphibians, open meadows for birds and deer, and the Fulling Mill River complete this quiet gem, worth a visit in every season.

Places and people, these are the important assets of our organization. Our financially supporting members; and volunteers providing administrative duties and land stewardship are critical to our success.

With the above thought in mind, I would like to mention the outstanding contributions of Monique Lehner to our organization. She joined the Board of Trustees in 1978 and has donated hundreds of hours in a variety of tasks, setting the gold standard for volunteer commitment. She is planning to leave Hingham soon, to be closer to her family, and we will miss her personal warmth and enthusiasm. 




Monique and Philip Lehner at The Orchard



Trustee News



New HLCT Board member, Nick Sowles

We welcome Nick Sowles as our newest board member. Nick and his family have lived in Hingham for three years near the More-Brewer property. His youngest daughter is in first grade at Plymouth River School. A third generation dentist, Nick practices esthetic dentistry in Norwell, where his wife, Penny, runs their practice. He earned his DMD from Tufts University, and a BA in biology from Kenyon College. Nick feels that the preservation of accessible land in its natural state adds value to our community. 




Hingham Trails Planning Project

DON KIDSTON

The Hingham Trails Plan preparation, which began late in 2014, is nearing completion, with a draft plan currently undergoing review. The Plan is being prepared by the BSC Group under the direction of Hingham's Conservation and Community Planning Departments with guidance from a working committee. The working committee is made up of representatives of local groups active in open space and recreation, including HLCT. Public input efforts, including public meetings and user surveys, are reflected in the development of the plan.



The plan will include detailed maps of Hingham's many parks and conservation areas and proposals to improve access and utility of these areas, including better public information, signage, access and trail enhancements. The plan will also

propose links integrating the trails into a town-wide trail network that would connect Hingham's parks, schools and other activity centers. One example of a proposed trail link is improvement to the connection between the Hingham Shipyard and the adjacent Bouve Conservation Area on Hewitt's Cove. It is expected that the final plan will be completed by the end of the year. 



Boardwalk in Jacobs Meadow

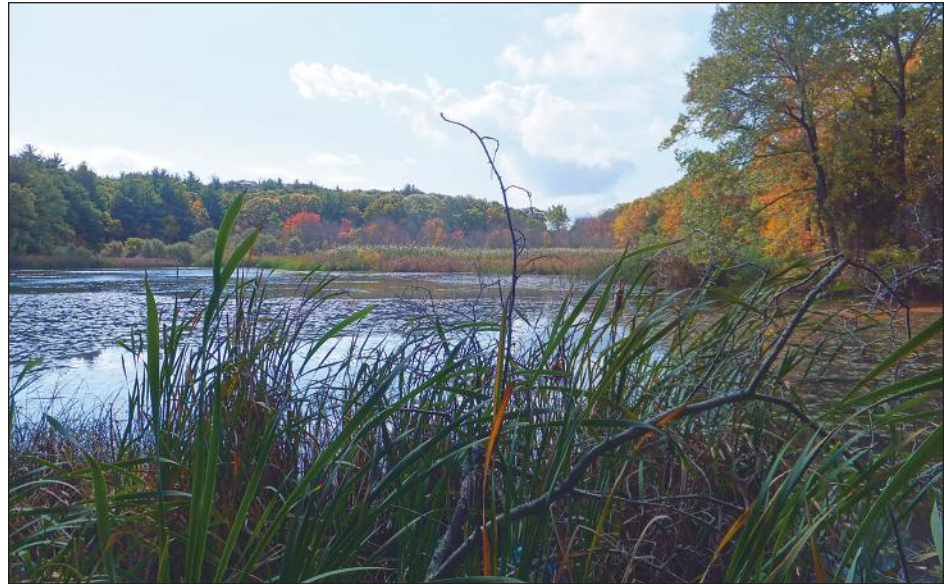


Landscape preserved through foresight and serendipity

Two of the most scenic conservation parcels in Hingham were preserved because of one family's love of the land. World's End was the family farm of John Brewer and remained in the Brewer family until it was acquired by The Trustees of Reservations in 1967. Great Hill, now More-Brewer Park, was purchased in 1884 by John Brewer's son Francis for sheep grazing with the ultimate goal of creating a town park. Initially, however, Francis built a house and farm buildings and lived at Great Hill with his family. Francis's great interest in trees led him to become Hingham's unofficial tree warden and is reflected in the property's wide variety of trees and shrubs.


The future of the estate became in doubt when the property was sold in 1921 to Brookes More. Fortunately, however, More's daughter Katherine eventually married Francis Brewer's son, Wilmon, and together they preserved the property until they generously gave 107 acres of Great Hill to the town, creating More-Brewer park, dedicated in 1985. Together with two earlier land purchases, 30 acres to the north bordering the railroad and 48 acres across Hobart Street, the entire complex is 186 acres.

Guided by Ryland Rogers, we walked the elegantly built carriage roads, viewed superb large trees, swamps and Brewer Pond. Reminders of the geological past were visible in Great Hill's eskers, drumlins and kettle ponds. Standing in the foundation remnants of the immense four story barn, and picturing its many uses as workers' quarters and kitchen, live-stock shelter, and storage for water, hay and carriages, we imagined life in an earlier time strongly connected to the land.



Above: Brewer Pond


Right: An old gate in the barn foundation

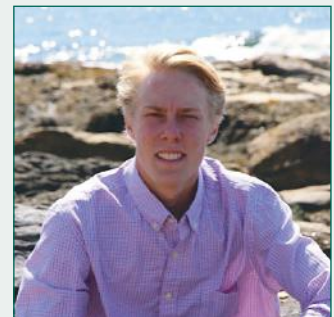
More-Brewer Park offers gentle walking and cross country skiing. Parking is available on Hobart Street and a kiosk features historical and horticultural information and a trail map. 



Philip O. Swanson Scholarship

JOE BIERWIRTH

Each year, the Land Trust is proud to award the Philip O. Swanson Scholarship to a senior graduating from Hingham High School. This year, our recipient was Stoddard Rowley who is now studying at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. Stod was a member of the Green Team at Hingham High, involved in recycling and composting lunchroom waste. He was also chosen to participate on the Town of Hingham Trail Committee, and was "honored" to have been involved in the process. At St. Lawrence, he has joined the Outing Club, is looking forward to hiking expeditions in the nearby Adirondacks; and is considering a major in Geology or Business. Stod is very grateful for the support of HLCT, and we wish him the best in his studies. 



Stoddard Rowley

Why Join the Hingham Land Conservation Trust?

All contributions to HLCT are tax-deductible, including land and conservation easements. Your gifts contribute to the quality of life in Hingham now and for generations to come.

The HLCT conserves land to protect our water supply, wildlife habitats and freshwater ponds and streams, while preserving passive recreational uses. Your gifts fund mowing to preserve open meadows, surveys to define property boundaries and other essential organizational needs. Presently we own 65 acres and hold conservation restrictions on 40 acres in the town of Hingham.

The Trustees of the Hingham Land Conservation Trust invite your membership, participation and comments. Mail in the enclosed envelope or write to:

Hingham Land Conservation Trust
PO Box 10
Hingham, MA 02043

For information, call (781) 749-0162 or go to www.hinghamlandtrust.org

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2014 Financial Summary

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Income | \$ 12,848 |
| Expenses | 11,314 |
| Net Income..... | 1,534 |
| Cash Assets..... | \$154,000 |



Webb State Park Walk

CHARLES WILLSE



View looking out to Grape Island



John Cole Memorial overlooking Boston Harbor

A warm day in May greeted the walkers for our visit to Webb State Park in Weymouth. Our expert guide, Ron Clough, provided an entertaining narrative of this sea-shrouded peninsula.

This compact 36-acre park is big on Boston Harbor views and has a fascinating history. Over 12,000 years ago the Native Americans used this area as a seasonal campsite to harvest plentiful quantities of shellfish, finfish, and wild fruits. The early colonists used the land for farming and grazing.

After the Civil War the Bradley family of Hingham acquired the land to build a fertilizer plant. The business was very successful and became the largest fertilizer company in the world in the 1880s. To produce the fertilizer they imported guano from South America which added substantial character to the smells of the seashore. The factory process eventually created an indus-

trial waste site which has since been cleaned and capped to look like a small hill. In the 1950s the land became a military base to protect Boston from attack during the Cold War. Underground silos for launching Nike missiles were installed, and electronically controlled from headquarters on Spinnaker Island. The technology became obsolete quickly and the base was turned over to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1977 for parkland.

Ron was involved in the construction of the current park and showed us the location of the missile launching silos, still present but buried underground. The landscape had to be cleared of military refuse and accumulated plant growth to produce the current rolling landscape of meadows, tree lined walks and scenic viewpoints. All the participants were amazed at this hidden gem of a park so close to our homes and vowed to return again. 